

From: Kurt Huhn
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Honorables,

I recently became aware of a deal between Microsoft and SGI wherein SGI has sold and transferred patents and knowledge surrounding OpenGL technology to Microsoft.

This troubles me for several reasons, primarily because this allows Microsoft a great deal of leverage over independent hardware and software vendors. In the past, Microsoft has tried to squash the further development of OpenGL by various hardware vendors through deals and brokerage with SGI. These largely failed though, thanks to a loyal base of hardware and software developers that recognized the superior technological capabilities of OpenGL, and continued in its development. However, because of these deals, OpenGL lost its foothold in the marketplace and Direct3D took over as the leading API for 3D visualization.

Now it appears that Microsoft may be able to squash, once and for all, the only competitor to its Direct3D API. If Microsoft owns the patents to both Direct3D (part of the DirectX API), and OpenGL, it can strongarm hardware and software vendors into supporting only Direct3D. Through these tactics Microsoft will destroy the abilities of hardware and software vendors to choose the API they develop with, and kill the only competitor to Direct3D.

This deal with SGI flies in the face of anti-trust activities. It seems as if Microsoft cares not what our judicial system may decide, but only on gaining an even larger monopolistic market share in the US. We can be certain of only one thing from this deal, that Microsoft will use these patents to bully hardware and software vendors, and engage in unfair business practices while doing so.

Please do not let this slip by unseen.

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